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Hiroshima: The partisans of nuclear disarmament have
remembered.

Flame of Hope

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[BMP - 412.4 kb]Saintes, 6 August 2010.

Nadine Vacher re-lights the Disarmament Flame in Saintes. On the right is Jean-Marie Matagne, the president of ACDN.

PHOTO DOMINIQUE PARIÉS.

At exactly 8.15 on August 6, Nadine Vacher of Oleron, an activist in ACDN, re-lit the Disarmament Flame at the foot of the Monument to the Dead at Saintes. This was a symbolic gesture performed 65 years to the day after the nuclear bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, by the USAF.

That bomb, nicknamed "Little Boy", exploded on 6 August 1945 causing many deaths then and afterwards (an estimated 250 000).

"Never Again Anywhere!" was the clear message of the ACDN activists, who were headed by Jean-Marie Matagne, and accompanied by several war veterans and two elected officials. It was like a small committee ceremony: 17 participants, including Catherine Quéré, local MP (Socialist Party) and Christian Couillaud, city councillor (Green Party).

After the flame was lit, Georges Mounier, vice-president of the local Veterans' Association was the first to speak: *"Even though disarmament is not directly linked to the mission of veterans' and war-victims associations, that doesn't stop us being very vigilant so that future generations take stock of the dangers".*

« **Peace is under threat** »

A fervent advocate of nuclear disarmament, Jean-Marie Matagne then put the question: *"Can we take peace for granted? Certainly not. Like democracy, peace is constantly under threat."*

Not for the first time, Jean-Marie Matagne issued an appeal to sign the petition to the President of the French Republic urging him *"to involve France in the process of abolishing nuclear weapons and to consult the French people by referendum on this major question."*

Catherine Quéré indicated that she has recently signed this petition. Matagne announced that some other socialist MPs had done so: Marie-Line Reynaud (Charente) and Philippe Plisson (Gironde).

As the MP for Charente-Maritime, Catherine Quéré then spoke in support of ACDN's cause and actions: *"ACDN regularly calls us to do our duty; it was important to be here for the duty of memory."*

Christian Couillaud had written in his speech: *"It is easy to think that weapons of mass destruction are effective to settle conflicts [...] Nuclear blackmail has no effect on international terrorism [...] There is an increasing risk of nuclear weapons being used by small uncontrolled groups [...] For elected representatives of the left like us, justice and peace cannot cohabit with the threat of annihilation."*

At the same hour there were commemorations in Hiroshima, attended by many Japanese, including some hibakusha - survivors of 1945. For the first time an official representative of the USA was present to recall these dark pages in world history.

Translated from French by Peter Low (NZ)

See also: [The Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki Commemorated in France and around the world](#)

[Democracy, Disarmament, and the Rule of Law](#), by Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
United Nations

[Message of UNSG Ban Ki-moon to Hiroshima Conference for the total abolition of nuclear weapons by 2020](#)